

Bergen SuperAccepts to Jacoby Transfers

By Spencer Hurd

When you first learn to play bridge, there are so many artificialities and special conventions that the newcomer is sometimes overwhelmed. However, some of the gadgets that the experts use are so valuable that they should be quickly put into the arsenal of bridge "weapons" that you unleash on the opponents.

The problem is this:

- *Your partner has to play them too!*
- *Also, there should be a dramatic payoff.*
- *And, oh yes, the bid should occur often enough to remember!*

Marty Bergen recommended "super-accept" bids years ago, and the expert world has accepted them. You should too. Here they are: You open 1NT (15-17). Partner "transfers" with 2♦, guaranteeing at least a 5-card heart suit. Partner wants and expects you to bid 2♥. Partner may intend to pass 2♥ or may plan to bid on. This is the Jacoby Transfer Bid.

Bergen says you (the no-trump bidder) should make bids on occasion that vary from an automatic 2♥ bid. There are two reasons. You can pre-empt (even by a 1NT opener), and you can get to good (but close) game contracts. And you can stay out of poor game contracts or over-high part score contracts.

Here are opener's responses to 2♦:

1. With 2 cards in hearts, bid 2♥.
2. With 4 cards in hearts and 15 or a "bad" 16, bid 3♥.
3. With 4 cards in hearts and 17 or a good 16, bid your doubleton!
4. With 3 cards in hearts including at least one honor (or 4-3-3-3 with 4 hearts) and 17 points, and with every suit soundly stopped (Kxx or QJx or better), bid 2NT. [The transfer bidder might want to try 3NT holding six hearts and 2 of the top 3 honors. The transfer bidder should bid 3NT over your 2NT with KQxxxx in hearts and nothing else, expecting opener to get 6 heart tricks and make 3NT.]
5. With 5 hearts, bid 4♥.
6. With anything else, bid 2♥
7. The responses to a transfer of 2♥ showing spades are similar.

Bergen makes these points which are pretty much accepted. When you hold nine hearts between you and partner, you can usually make 3♥ so the 3-level is fairly safe. When 3♥ is defeated, it usually turns out that the defense had a contract they could make (and might bid if your bidding dies at 2♥).

When partner **doesn't superaccept**, the responder can usually bypass an aggressive move knowing the major suit fit is poor. You are able to bid many close game contracts that are quite good contracts and that others are doomed by their methods to play in a part-score. .

If opener doesn't respond 2♥ to your transfer, and you want to signoff in 3♥, then a 3♦ bid by you is a "retransfer" to 3♥. This time partner will accept the transfer.

Occasionally you can bid a great slam that others can not bid. Or you can stay out of a marginal slam that others are bidding. All these bids are alertable, including 2H ("Denies 4-cards in hearts and certain other good hands").

Alternatives: some play that a jump to 3♥ shows 4 trumps and that "you like your hand." [This translates to 16 or 16+ for the rest of us.] This saves the other bids for really good 17-pointers. Some also will superaccept with great 3-card support but not a hand in one of the earlier categories. Bid 3♥ over 2♦ holding, say,

♠ AJ, ♥AQT, ♦KQT87, ♣87.

For some famous players, these bids are still "under consideration" meaning they haven't been persuaded to upgrade their Jacoby bids. Nevertheless, SuperAccepts are mainstream among the class of "Flight A" players because they are easy to use, occur a lot, and they have proved their worth, at least to their advocates.